Edmonton sees part-time jobs down; full-time jobs up

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After a strong showing in the early months of 2017, employment in the **Edmonton** Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) was down by approximately 4,000 positions in July 2017. The losses occurred entirely in part-time employment in professional, financial and educational services.

The employment gains that the Edmonton CMA saw were concentrated in manufacturing and construction: approximately 3,000 new full-time positions during July 2017. However, these gains were not enough to offset losses seen in part-time employment.

With the growing working age population and labour force, and with employment losses, the unemployment rate in the Edmonton CMA jumped from 7.9% in June 2017 to 8.5% in July. The unemployment rate for Calgary in July 2017 was also 8.5%, down from 8.9% in June 2017.

Labour Force Survey Results–Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area
Three-month moving average–seasonally adjusted

	July 2016	June 2017	**July 2017**	June 2017 to July 2017	July 2016 to July 2017	June 2017 to July 2017	July 2016 to July 2017
	(000)	(000)	**(000)**	(000)	(000)	%	%
Population (15 years and older)	1121.9	1136.5	**1138.2**	1.7	16.3	0.1	1.5
Labour force	821.5	828	**828.4**	0.4	6.9	0.0	0.8
Employment	758.1	762.5	**758.5**	-4	0.4	-0.5	0.1
Unemployment	63.5	65.4	**70**	4.6	6.5	7.0	10.5
Unemployment rate (%)	7.7	7.9	**8.5**	0.6	0.8	...	...
Participation rate (%)	73.2	72.9	**72.8**	-0.1	-0.4	...	...
Employment rate (%)	67.6	67.1	**66.6**	-0.5	-0.1	...	...

Source: Statistics Canada

Employment in **Alberta** was also down in July 2017, with a loss of 14,000 jobs. A reduction in full-time employment was the primary factor behind the overall job loss in the province. The number

of individuals seeking work in Alberta slipped marginally in July. Consequently, Alberta's unemployment rate went from 7.4% in June 2017 to 7.8% in July 2017.

In July, **Canada's** overall employment rose by 11,000 positions. This modest gain was driven by a strong expansion in full-time employment that more than offset a loss seen in part-time positions. Job growth was concentrated in manufacturing, trade and information and cultural industries. As a result, the Canadian unemployment rate edged down from 6.5% in June 2017 to 6.3% in July 2017. This is the lowest unemployment rate for Canada since October of 2008, the beginning of the global financial crisis.

Significance

The Edmonton region's job losses during 2016 in the goods-producing sector demonstrated that the region was not immune to the impact of decreased oil prices. Nonetheless, gains in the Edmonton region's full-time employment since January 2017 suggest employers are now more confident about adding to their workforce.

Over the third and fourth quarters of 2017, employment in Edmonton should see growth in the manufacturing, professional services and logistics sectors. However, the unemployment rate is unlikely to move much lower than July's 8.5% value as the local labour force continues to expand and individuals, discouraged by very difficult employment conditions in the second half of 2016, return to the active labour force.

Growth in the working age population, up by 1.5% from July 2016 to July 2017, has been a key factor in addressing labour and skill shortages that began to emerge in Edmonton prior to the downturn in energy prices in 2014. However, with Edmonton's unemployment rate well above the national average, net migration into the region has slowed down (especially when compared to the volumes seen from 2010 to 2014), which will slow the growth in the working age population over the remainder of 2017.

Limitations

Since employment trends, particularly in the full-time category, tend to lag behind developments in overall economic activity, they are a better indicator of past, rather than current, conditions in the economy. However, employment trends are useful predictors of future changes in incomes and consumer spending. Statistics Canada publishes a three-month moving average of all labour force values for the Edmonton region, an approach that sometimes results in the number of reported jobs lagging behind developments in the Edmonton region's economy.

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